

CIA/OGCR /PN 61.2684775 ITEM 011 UNCLASSIFIED--PRC CITY BRIEF
CH'ANG-SHA

CIA JUL75

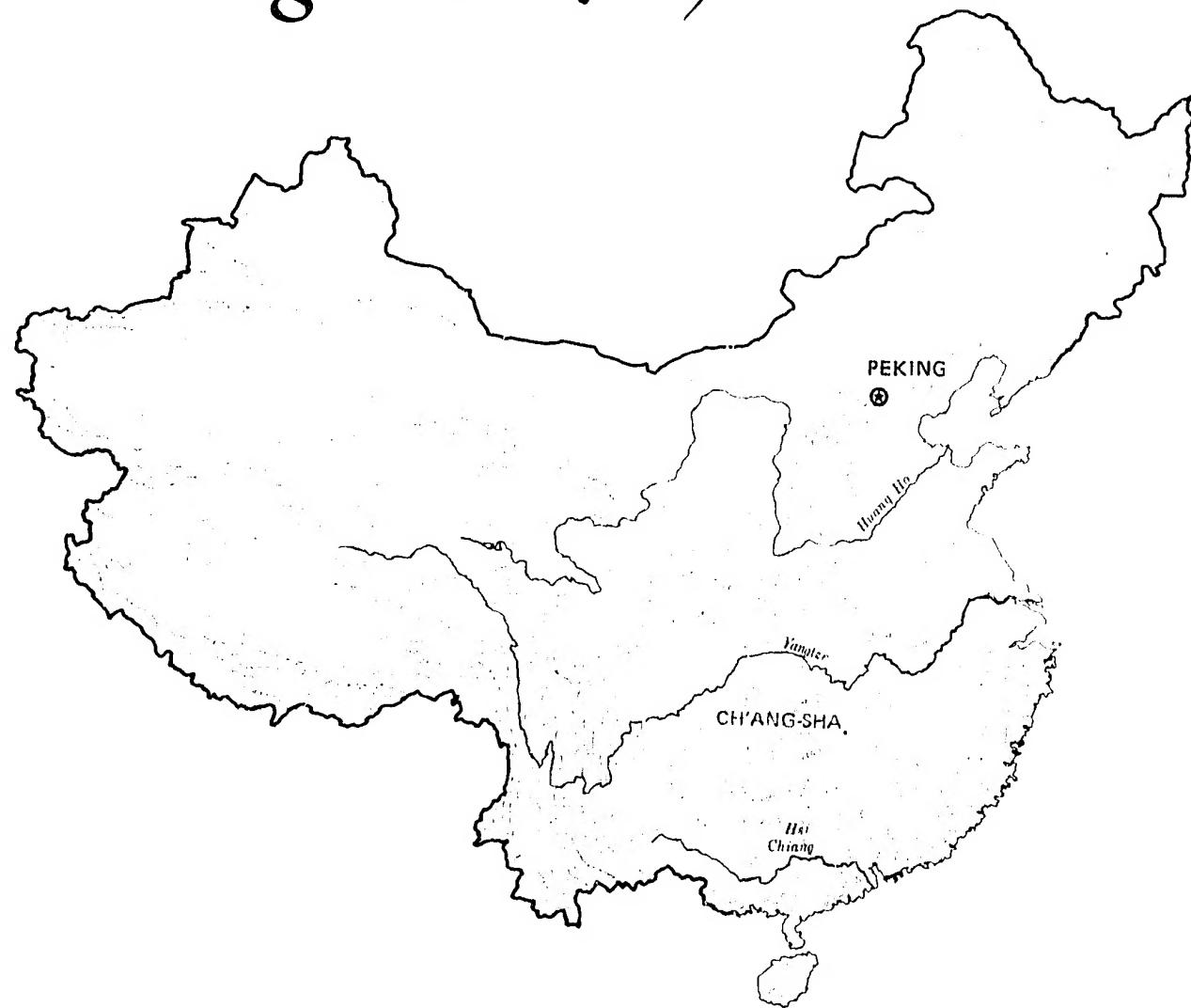
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ITEM 011

PRC CITY BRIEF

Ch'ang-sha 長沙



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PN 61.2684/75

JUL 1975

CH'ANG-SHA (Changsha)

(pronounced chang sha)

Chinese romanized system of spelling:	Changsha
Meaning in Chinese:	long sand
Location:	28°11'N 112°59'E (approx. latitude of Orlando, Florida)
Elevation:	195 feet above sea level
Population:	1,500,000 in municipality; 800,000 in built-up area (total municipality comprises 1,800 square miles)
Climate:	<u>Jan</u> <u>April</u> <u>July</u> <u>Oct</u>
Mean daily maximum temperature (°F)	45 70 94 75
Mean daily minimum temperature (°F)	35 56 78 59
Mean number of days with precipitation	12 16 8 10
Mean monthly precipitation (inches)	1.9 5.7 4.4 3.0

CH'ANG-SHA

General

Ch'ang-sha is the provincial capital and foremost cultural and educational center of Hunan Province. Although relatively undistinguished in terms of either scenic or historic attractions, the city is representative of the urban expansion that has occurred in China over the past 2 decades: typically, a mix of new offices, stores, and factories served by wide, often tree-lined streets that radiate from an older, traditional Chinese city. Located on the lower reaches of the Hsiang Chiang (river), a major tributary of the Yantze, the city is an important port and it has served as a leading trade center for more than 2,000 years. The arrival of foreign concessionaries in 1904 and the later linking (1918) of the city by rail to Han-k'ou (Hankow) and Peking to the north reinforced Ch'ang-sha's role as a center for trade and spurred a modest development of modern light industry, particularly in food processing and textiles. Although partial destruction of the city occurred during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), and the ensuing Civil War prevented a return to peaceful conditions until 1949, the Communists, once in control, quickly reconstructed and rehabilitated the city; by 1952 its economy was again expanding.

The post-1952 expansion of Ch'ang-sha, lasting until the 1960s, was based almost exclusively on the productivity of its agricultural hinterland. The intensively cultivated alluvial lowlands surrounding Ch'ang-sha are some of the most productive in China, and Hunan, traditionally a surplus food-producing province, annually furnishes about 15 percent of the country's total rice crop. Ch'ang-sha, located in the center of this granary, boasts at least a dozen large rice mills and is one of the country's principal rice markets. Unprocessed rice accounts for approximately 40 percent of the total cargo unloaded at Ch'ang-sha, and rice milling is the largest single industry in the city.

Although the city's economy remains strongly tied to its agricultural hinterland, the relative importance of food processing and handling has declined over the past few years as Ch'ang-sha has entered a third expansionary phase. Currently, its economy is being diversified and augmented by the establishment of small-to medium-sized machinery, chemical, electronic, and metalworking plants.

Ch'ang-sha has a humid subtropical climate, somewhat similar to that of the southeastern United States. Autumn normally is the most pleasant time of year with warm temperatures, bearable humidities, and frequent periods of clear, dry weather. The weather probably is least pleasant during spring. Skies are often overcast, rain -- frequently drizzle -- persists for days at a time, and slightly more than half the total annual precipitation (52 inches) is recorded from March through June. From April onwards, the constant dampness is accompanied by higher temperatures and humidities; and, at this time, Ch'ang-sha with its hinterland of irrigated ricefields rightfully earns its title as one of China's more humid regions. During the summer months, rain is less frequent and cloudy days fewer; temperatures, however, commonly rise to the low 90's (occasionally over 100°F) and at night rarely drop below 75°F. Winters are cold for this latitude, and January and February temperatures usually range from the mid-30's to the mid- and upper-40's; occasional cold waves may lower the temperatures into the 20's. A little snow may fall during midwinter but accumulations are slight and short-lived.

Ch'ang-sha Today

The Hsiang Chiang separates Ch'ang-sha's approximately 25 square miles of built-up area into two unequal parts. Four-fifths of the city is on the east bank, and here are located most of Ch'ang-sha's industry, all of its railroad facilities, and the provincial government offices. The smaller built-up area on the west bank is devoted almost entirely to education and has functioned as Hunan's literary and cultural center since the tenth century. The principal educational institutes are clustered around the base of picturesque Yueh-lu Shan (hill) and include Hunan University, Hunan Teachers College, and the Central-South Institute of Metallurgy. A recently opened highway bridge, the construction of which involved much part-time labor by Ch'ang-sha residents from all walks of life, connects this district with the major part of the city.

Ch'ang-sha now occupies an area several times larger than it did a decade ago, and as a consequence the older section of the city has shrunk in size relative to the entire urbanized area. A visit to the old town, located in the area between the Hsiang Chiang and the westernmost branch of the Peking-Canton Railroad, is interesting for its distinctive Chinese environment; physically, this area probably differs little from that which prevailed prior to 1949. The focus of the old city is the riverfront, and old warehouses, small boatyards, and turn-of-the-century processing plants line the river. Although Ch'ang-sha is the largest port

on the river, its riverfront has changed little during the last quarter century; no modern docking and cargo-handling facilities have been built and almost all activities are confined to the few landing areas. Most of the cargo that is off-loaded at Ch'ang-sha -- food grains, construction materials, coal and timber accounting for about 70 percent of the total volume -- arrives either in long, graceful, flat-sailed cargo boats or low-riding, utilitarian barges. Away from the riverfront the old city is a homogeneous blend of closely spaced residences, businesses, and small factories, many of which produce textiles, porcelains, and the famous Hunan embroideries and eiderdowns. Gray, two-storied wooden buildings with gray tile roofs predominate, creating a monochromatic cityscape that is only occasionally brightened by buildings roofed with reddish-orange tiles.

Modern Ch'ang-sha fully comprises three-fourths of the built-up area and has completely encapsulated the old city east of the Hsiung Chiang. Most of the new buildings are large, sturdily built and are completely "utilitarian in appearance. The formerly undesirable low-lying land north of the old city has been drained and diked and is now used almost exclusively for industrial storage. Major government buildings and schools are located to the northeast. A well-landscaped park -- frequently on the itinerary of foreign visitors -- is also in this part of the city. The nine-storied Hunan Guest House, Ch'ang-sha's tallest building and probably possessing the best tourist accommodations, is located in the park. A steel plant, associated industries, and workers apartments dominate the central portions of modern Ch'ang-sha. Here are found Ch'ang-sha's showcase factories that often are shown to foreign visitors. To the south of the old city are the newest and fastest growing sections of Ch'ang-sha. A mix of light industries and workers apartments are spreading over once-productive ricefields, although many small fields remain and impart a rural flavor to much of the area. Large and modern heavy industry complexes have recently been built south and southeast of the rail line. The city's principal military installations are also located here. The municipal airport lies approximately 8 miles south of this rapidly growing area.

Ch'ang-sha is a relatively new addition to the itinerary of visiting foreigners and is not yet a common tourist stop even though it is on the Peking-Canton Railroad. With the possible exception of a recently exhumed and widely publicized 2,000-year-old female corpse, there are no unique displays of Chinese antiquity or similar cultural attractions. Rather, this is Mao Tse-tung country, and almost all Ch'ang-sha's tourist attractions are associated with the Chairman's early revolutionary activities.

Mao resided in the city as a student from 1912 to 1918, and here his conversion to Communism began. In the course of these 6 years, Mao, according to the tour guides, matured politically from a naive, country schoolboy who had never read a newspaper to a questioning student, progressive teacher, and local political organizer-agitator-thinker who came to edit the Hsiang River Review, a regional political journal. Many of the sites associated with these activities have been preserved or restored, and the tourist likely will be obliged to visit many of them -- if not all.

A more interesting attraction is a Mao-inspired event that takes place every June 24th -- the anniversary of one of Mao's now-famous swims. During his student days in Ch'ang-sha, Mao became an ardent physical culturalist, frequently swimming the Hsiang from the southern tip of Chieh-tzu Chou (Orange Island). He repeated the feat on a return visit to the city on June 24, 1959 -- an event now yearly commemorated by a mass swim of Ch'ang-sha's residents across the river.

Shao-shan

Ch'ang-sha is the point from which visits of Shao-shan, Mao Tse-tung's birthplace, commonly originate. Particularly since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, Shao-shan has become the tourist mecca of the Peoples Republic of China. During the Cultural Revolution, hundreds of thousands of young people made the pilgrimage. The distance to Shao-shan is slightly more than 50 miles from Ch'ang-sha, and the trip takes approximately 2 hours by bus. The tremendous increase in travel to Shao-shan initiated during the Red Guard phase of the Cultural Revolution led to the building of a branch rail line to Shao-shan, but its use apparently is reserved for Chinese. In addition to the Mao family home, visitors are taken through a modern building housing a museum (opened in 1966), where memorabilia of Mao are on exhibit.

A side attraction of the trip enroute to Shao-shan is the view of a relatively prosperous countryside. Rice occupies 90 percent of the lowland areas; tea is the major crop found on the higher ground and the terraced slopes of numerous low hills.

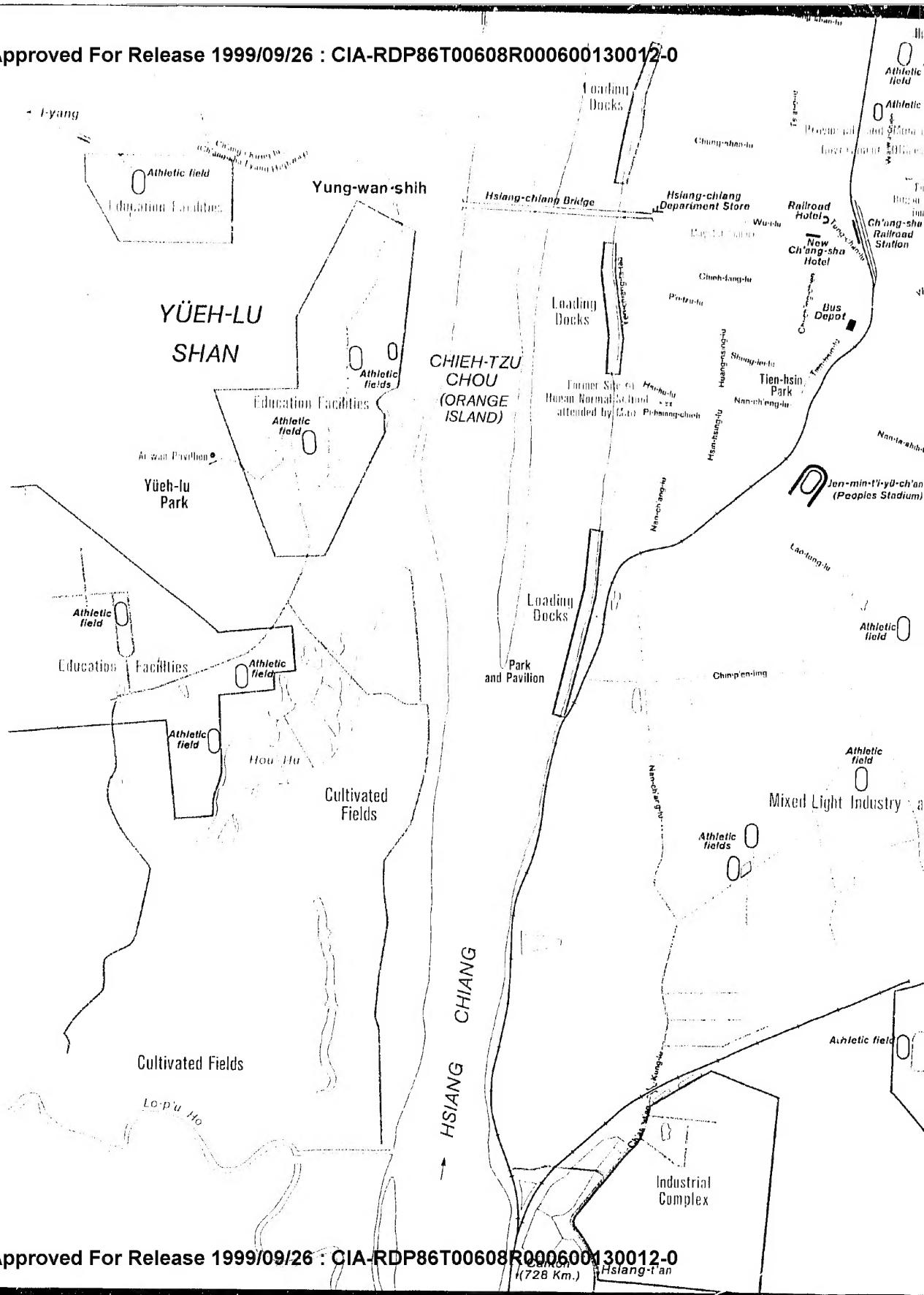
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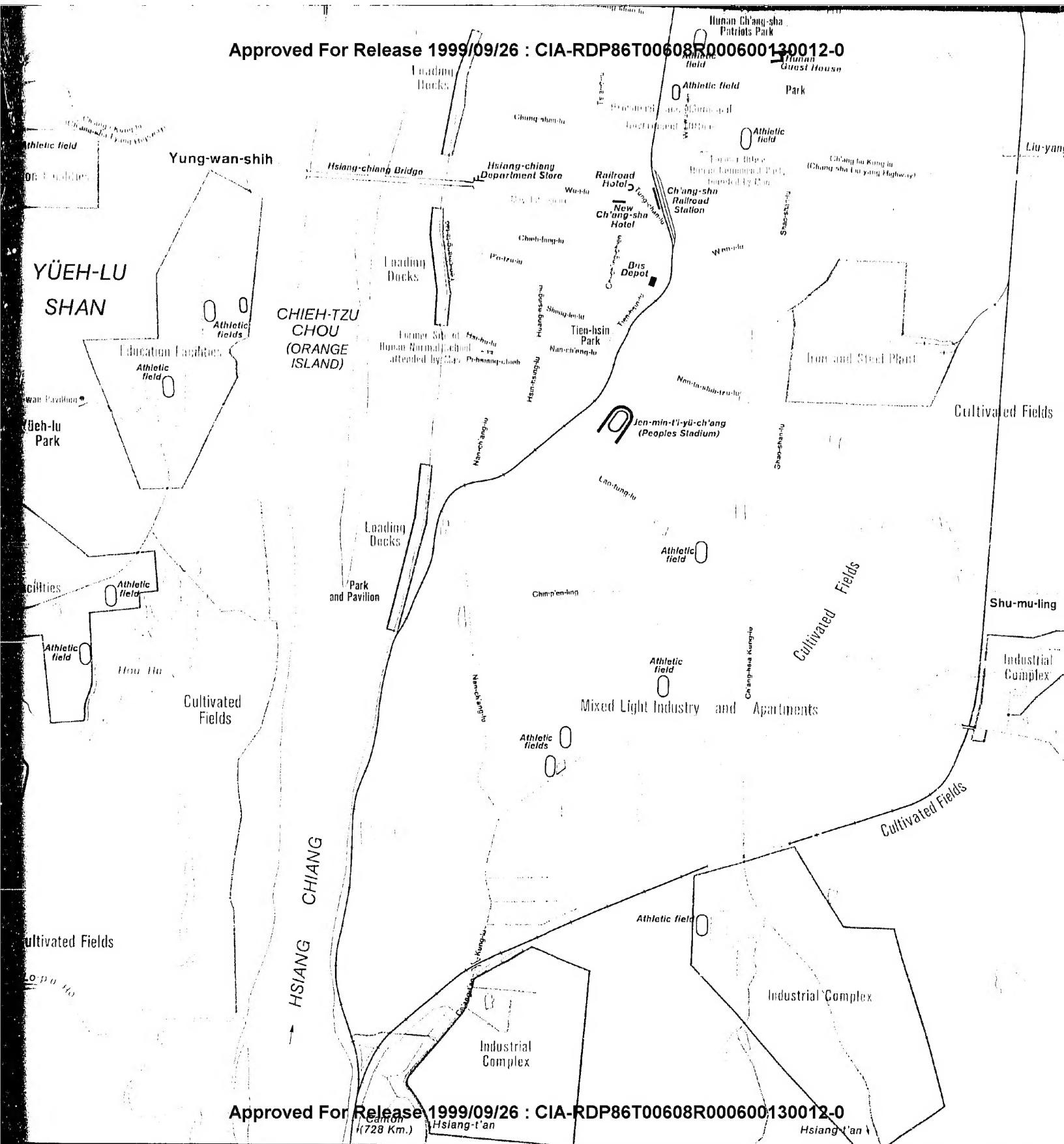
CHANG-SHA

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(728 Km.) Hsiang-t'an

